

The Need for Consumers' Protection

With the spectacular growth of supply for goods and being confronted with an exacerbation of competition, manufacturers were forced to remain objective to the fact that their competition depends on the number of customers attracted. As a result, manufacturers are concerned about the full satisfaction of the demands of consumers, so that their products are as close as possible, even to meet all expectations.

And yet, in a market economy, there are many shortcomings in its mechanism that may alter and influence the rights and interests of consumers. Thus, consumers are not free in their choices because they are subject to constraints arising from mass production, the standard contract clauses, and some manifestations of monopoly. Meanwhile, market transparency is not always a reality, which dominates the market in this regard is advertising, this not having as its primary objective to provide information, but mostly sales promotion. Also, the issue of security products is illustrative for the disadvantaged situation of consumers the contemporary reality is marked by a series of accidents related to consumer goods. Still manifest serious imbalances in terms of access to justice and the interests of consumers compared with businesses, good knowledgeable of relevant legislation and very well represented by their employers and professional organizations.

Indeed, there are many drives that come to argue the need to protect consumer rights and interests but one of the most important are:

- Regardless the economic context, legislative or other nature, there from the economical, informational, legal and representing the interest points of view, a clear disparity of power among consumer, especially as individual and the economic organizations with which he/she could reach into a conflict of interest:

- **economic**: the consumer resources are obviously lower than those available to the trader;

- **information**: the manufacturer always has more knowledge about his product than the consumer, and consumers' information is hampered due to the current information explosion;

- **in legal terms**: the manufacturer/trader knows better the laws governing the commercial relationships, use them with legal advisers, while consumer is ignoring even the existence of a law that protects him by its provisions;

- **representation**: manufacturers are well represented both by business, professional and trade organizations as well as by their ability to persuade the authorities for adopting rules to take account of their interest, while consumers are often an amorphous mass, of atomized individualities, out of which few people decide to promote their interests through deeds within the organizations that represent them.

- Legally, producers are not obliged to adopt the solution for carrying out a quality assurance system in their organizations or to certify quality, unless they are acting in a legal regulatory framework. However, in such circumstances it is clearly that several products are made at a confidence level regarding quality, low enough to justify consumer protection. There is the added fact that the construction and operation of national certification and accreditation faces many difficulties, especially technical, making their

purpose, regarding ensuring compliance with quality requirements and safety not be achieved.

- The need for protection of consumer rights and interests appeared, in general, also because of multiplication of unfair competition practices and the use of aggressive forms of sale or shocking, often equivalent to a pressure exerted on the consumer

- Consumer protection becomes even more obvious if one takes into account that in the context of international trade liberalization, the restrictions put on the free movement of goods are diminishing. Effects of globalization on consumers are not always positive because they are often abused by a highly complex and varied offer and, as consequence, in a situation to consume products about they do not have the information.

Consumer policy is necessary to put into focus the following objectives:

- protection of consumers against the risk of purchasing a product or a service that could endanger their life, health or safety or influence their legitimate rights and interests;
- promoting and protecting economic interests of consumers;
- consumer access to comprehensive, accurate and precise information about the essential characteristics of products and services so that the decision to be taken about them to better meet their needs;
- consumer education;
- effective compensation of consumers;
- helping consumers to organize to express their views in decision making processes concerning them;
- promoting international cooperation in consumer protection and participation in rapid exchange of information;
- prevent and combat, by all means, unfair trade practices and service delivery, including the financial ones that may influence the interests of consumers.

Policy of consumer protection is a basic component of social protection, which materializes in a system of mandatory rules requiring a certain conduct of economic operators, so the citizen as consumer and partner on the goods and services market to be respected and protected and to be capable to act when its interests are violated.

Within the market economy, the consumer has a dominant position, it constitutes the reference of all actions taken by both the manufacturer and trader, and its rights and interests ensure that position.

Being a consumer is a quality that belongs with all citizens, and citizen rights, as a consumer, are human rights. The importance accorded to the consumer derives from the consequences that its lack might have on human beings, because deception of men - consumer by his fellow man, manufacturer, or trader is prejudicial to human dignity. The first, repeatedly discredited, will resign from the state of human conscious fooled. The second, once fraudulent, often illegally, will find that working less well, can earn better. In this way distorts the ethical "profession" of the consumer and also the manufacturer or the trader.

It should also be noted that partial or hesitant approach to the legitimate rights of consumers might cause a reversal of values that will expand over time, on the spiritual goods.

As in political democracy requires to ensure the rights of voters, the economy involves to ensure the consumer rights, so their protection.

This issue, which has the theme “Protecting consumers’ rights and interests”, highlights several approaches that reflect the concerns of researchers in this field. Thus, the review contents a series of articles as: Human Factor’s Involvement in the Consumer Protection Management; Media Knowledge Consumers Protection; The Romanian Consumer and His/Her Rights: Opinions and Attitudes; The Application of Main Component Analysis Method on Indicators of Romanian National Authority for Consumers Protection Activities; Study on the Students’ Perception of Knowledge Usefulness and Necessity Concerning Tourists’ Protection; The Adjustment of Perspective Among Students Regarding Protection of Educational Services’ Consumer; New Approaches of Consumers’ Protection in Terms of Management Systems’ International Standards Evolution; The Risk Perception for Consumer Segments in E-commerce and Its Implication for the Marketing Strategy; Considerations Regarding the Security and Protection of E-banking Services Consumers’ Interest; Analyzing Students’ Perceptions from Their Interests and Rights’ Protection Perspective within Various International Contexts; Study on the Information Level of Pupils and Parents Regarding the Effects of Unhealthy Food Consumption; Research on Consumers’ Self-Protection through a Healthy Diet; Environmental Quality, Stimulating Factor Consumption in the XXI Century; Managing Eco-Design of Industrial Goods and Consumers’ Protection Nexus; Multinational Companies Responsibilities Regarding Consumers Safety; Security and Consumer Protection; E-tourism and Tourism Services Consumer Protection; Alternative Dispute Resolution through Mediation in Romanian Retail Banking; Buying Better for Your Money: The Smart Buyer’s Decalogue; Consumption for the Fulfillment of Human Life; Consumption of Public Childcare and Educational Services: An End-User Perspective; Romanian Harmonization of Laws with European Union Policies Regarding Consumer Protection.

**Editor-in-Chief,
Vasile Dinu**